

THE KODAIKANAL BIRDS AND HOW TO NAME THEM.

BY

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Kodaikanal, in the Palni Hills, Madura District, is a good place to study birds. One's first impression is of a great abundance of bird-life in the trees, shrubbery, and open spaces about every house. After a short time, however, one notices that the same kinds of birds are seen again and again. The number of different species is actually not as large as in many places on the plains. This is an advantage for the beginner, since too many different birds seen at once would cause confusion. The reasons for the limited number of species are not far to seek. Firstly, Kodaikanal is too high for many birds. Some species live on the plains and never venture into the hills at all. Some, like the sparrows and crows, are brave enough to climb to about 5,000 ft., but not up to 7,000. Many other birds are found only in the forests between 2,000 and 5,000 ft. The species that prefer the hill-tops, and those that wander up so high, are comparatively few. Secondly, Kodaikanal is too far south. Migrants from the north drop off one by one in the more northerly latitudes of India for the winter. Only a few reach $10^{\circ} 14'$ north latitude, where Kodaikanal is located. Thirdly, Kodaikanal has little water, and so there are few water-birds found there. Land-birds, too, would be more numerous if there were more woodland and more farms and gardens in place of the grassy downs which offer little shelter and in which the bird population is fairly scanty.

There are one or two drawbacks to the study of birds at Kodaikanal. One is the height of some of the trees. The blue-gums are so tall that one almost requires a telescope to see birds in them. Curiously, very few birds seem to like blue-gums, but there are many other big trees which tire the neck of the observer. Another hindrance is the density of the foliage in the *sholas* (jungles). This makes it hard to find a bird which moves about much, and one has to record many brief and imperfect observations. On the whole, however, it is a great place for birds, and those who find the difficulties of field-work too great can sit on the verandah and concentrate on a few species.

Purpose. When I first came to Kodaikanal, I longed for some book which would help me to identify the birds I saw. I have now, after seven seasons, named most of the common birds to my own satisfaction, and this paper is an attempt to provide for the beginner the help I myself needed. Of course, I wish it were illustrated, because a picture conveys more than many words. However, I have tried to give pictures, in broad strokes, with a few words. Most descriptions are so full as to confuse the reader. I have perhaps erred on the opposite side, giving only those few markings by which the species found at Kodaikanal can be

distinguished from one another quickly and easily. For complete descriptions, you can go to the big books,—Baker and Inglis' *Birds of Southern India* (Government Press, Madras, 1930), or the eight-volume *Fauna of British India,—Birds*. But it is not necessary to know all the details of colouration when you meet a new bird. Having learned to recognize the species by a few distinctive marks or habits, you can fill in for yourself by observation the interesting and significant details. For some idea of the vast amount of fascinating information there is to be learned about each species, turn to Whistler's *Popular Handbook of Indian Birds*. Many of our species do not appear in Whistler's book, however.

Scope. All the species in this list have been recorded on the Palni Hills between 6,000 and 8,000 ft. elevation. I have limited myself to birds that are present during the season from April to June, since most people are in Kodaikanal then. There are only a few migrants and winter visitors in the list. I have omitted, for the most part, birds with which I am not personally acquainted. There may be some serious omissions because I have not been afield enough or in the right places. However, I am consoled by the knowledge that there is no such thing as a complete bird-list for any locality, since the day after a list is published a new bird may turn up. I have avoided as far as possible all reference to birds of the plains, since people who study birds in Kodaikanal may have little or no knowledge of the plains-birds of Madura District. The scientific ornithologist will ask for confirmation of some of my records by specimens. To this I reply that I do not use a gun, nor have I had personal access to any specimens collected at Kodaikanal. I have received some help, however, by a study of the following published lists, which are based for the most part on specimens collected:

'A List of Birds Collected and Observed on the Palani Hills', by Rev. S. B. Fairbank, D.D., in *Stray Feathers*, vol. v, 387 ff.

'A Few Additional Notes on Birds on the Pulney Hills', by Terry in *Stray Feathers*, vol. x, 467 ff.

'The Ornithology of Travancore and Cochin', by Sālim Ali in this *Journal*, beginning in vol. xxxvii. Mr. Sālim Ali collected in the High Range within 25 miles of Kodaikanal, and he is my authority for the names I have used, many of which are different from those found in *The Birds of Southern India*, thanks to the recent work on nomenclature done by Mr. Hugh Whistler.

TITS.

1. **Travancore Yellow-cheeked Tit.** *Machlolophus xanthogenys travancorensis*.

Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.

Field-marks: A wide black line below from the bill to the tail. Crested head. The head is black, with eyebrows and cheeks pale yellow.

Haunts: Trees, usually high up. They travel about in small groups, often in company with White-eyes. Fairly common.

Song: A high-pitched clear whistle of several emphatic notes. Rather like a Grey-headed Flycatcher's call.

NUTHATCHES.

2. **Velvet-fronted Nuthatch.** *Sitta frontalis*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Deep-blue above, rusty-white below. Bill red. A short, thick-set bird.

Haunts: It runs about on the bark of trees, often head down. From two to ten may be seen together, usually in thick woods. Fairly common.

Call: A rapid series of high-pitched 'chip's'.

LAUGHING THRUSHES.

3. **Wynaad Laughing Thrush.** *Garrulax delesserti*.

Length: 10 in., larger than the Myna.

Field-marks: Brown and slaty above. Cheeks and throat white. It lacks the conspicuous white eye-brow of the next species.

Haunts: Underbush. I have only one doubtful record of it, but the late F. Dawson thought he had seen it on its nest near Pillar Rocks. Rare.

Call: Said to be a very noisy bird.

4. **Palni Laughing Thrush.** *Trochalopteron jerdoni fairbanki*.

Length: 8.5 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: White eye-brow, with black lines above and below it. Olive-brown upper parts. Breast grey, abdomen rufous.

Haunts: Bushes and thick trees, in the settlement as well as in the wilder sholas. Discovered at Kodaikanal by Rev. S. B. Fairbank in 1867. Abundant.

Calls: Loud shrieks of delight, whistles of surprise, or snatches of laughter, which have a ventriloquial effect of being more distant than they really are. Often when one bird calls, all within hearing join, making the woods ring.

SCIMITAR BABBLERS.

5. **Travancore Scimitar Babbler.** *Pomatorhinus horsfieldii travancoriensis*.

Length: 8.5 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: Curved yellow bill like a scimitar. Plumage dark-brown, with pointed white breast-patch and eye-brow.

Haunts: Woods and sholas, usually in thick foliage. It sometimes clings to the bark of trees like an enlarged Nuthatch. Not often seen, but fairly common.

Call: Loud and wooden, resembling the tone of the Barbet, but lower and more deliberate. The notes often are: *do, dō, do, do*, and then up to *fa, la*. As others have put it, one calls, 'Wot-ho-ho-ho', and before this is fairly out of his mouth comes the flute-like reply from his mate in the next bush, 'Yes, dear.'

BULBULS.

6. South Indian Black Bulbul. *Microscelis psaroides ganeesa*.
Length: 10 in., larger than the Myna.

Field-marks: Blackish, with rather long, curved, bright-red bill. There is a short rough crest on the head. Grey below, especially toward the tail. The tail is longer than a Blackbird's.

Haunts: Constantly moving about in the tree-tops in larger sholas. Often one meets large, loose flocks. Fairly common.

Calls: Loud, harsh screams, uttered most of the time. They would be very unpopular if they came near houses much.

7. Ceylon Red-vented Bulbul. *Molpastes cafer*.

Length: 8 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: The whole head is black, with a rough crest. Most of the plumage is grey-brown with markings like scales.

Haunts: About gardens or on bushy slopes. I have never met it above 5,200 ft. elevation, but others have found it occasionally at Kodaikanal.

Call: A cheerful, bubbling whistle, rather lower in pitch and rougher than the call of the Red-whiskered.

8. Southern Red-whiskered Bulbul. *Otocompsa jocosa fuscaudata*.

Length: 8 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: A sharp black crest, curving forward. Small red moustache. White below, with a brown collar-line.

Haunts: In bushy places, often in large flocks. Abundant.

Call: A musical series of whistled notes, high-pitched and tinkling.

9. The Yellow-browed Bulbul. *Iole icterica*.

Length: 8 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: A bright-yellow bird, when seen from below. Above, olive-green, with brown wings.

Haunts: The upper branches in thick woods, where it travels in loose companies up to 60 in number. I have not seen it in Kodaikanal, but Fairbank wrote that it came to 'the top'. Probably rare at this height.

Call: A clear, mellow, double whistle, given frequently.

SHORTWINGS.

10. White-bellied Shortwing. *Brachypteryx major albiventris*.

Length: 6.5 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: A dark-blue bird with light-brown eyes, white rump, and rounded wings. Compare this description with that of the Nilgiri Flycatcher, which is very similar. Young birds are spotted like those of the flycatchers.

Haunts: Thick undergrowth in the sholas. Most in evidence at dusk, when they come out onto roads and paths. Discovered in Kodaikanal by Rev. S. B. Fairbank in 1867. Fairly common.

Song: Beautiful and sprightly, long-continued and varied, uttered as the bird moves from twig to twig among the shadows. It is thrush-like in quality, but higher in pitch.

Calls: A loud chattering, and at times a faint high whistle.

CHATS.

11. **Southern Indian Stone Chat.** *Saxicola caprata atrata*.

Length: 6 in., smaller than the House Sparrow.

Field-marks: A stubby black bird with three white patches, on shoulders and rump. The female is brown with a pink rump.

Haunts: It perches on a bush-top in an open place, making short dashes to the ground or up into the air for insects. Abundant.

Call: Gives it its name. The song is short but rather sweet.

ROBINS.

12. **Ceylon Magpie-Robin.** *Copsychus saularis ceylonensis*.

Length: 9 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: A long-tailed black bird, with white belly and white in the wings and tail, but none on the rump.

Haunts: Orchards up to the level of Kodaikanal. Regularly found in the valley below the United Church.

Song: Clear, shrill, and varied, divided into short phrases. Heard most early in the morning.

THRUSHES.

13. **Travancore Blackbird.** *Turdus simillimus bourdilloni*.

Length: 10 in., larger than the Myna.

Field-marks: All blackish, with orange bill and legs. The female is dark-brown and grey. Many birds have yellow legs, and seem closer to *T. s. simillimus*, the Nilgiri Blackbird. Whistler thinks our Palni Hills birds are intermediate, but closer to Bourdillon's.

Haunts: In trees. It does not come out on open lawns, as much as its relatives, the English Blackbird and American Robin. Common.

Song: Loud, clear, and varied. Sung with a few pauses all day long.

14. **Nilgiri Thrush.** *Oreocincla dauma neilghiriensis*.

Length: 9.5 in., the same as the Myna.

Field-marks: Above, brown, somewhat spotted. The wing is barred with black. Below, white with brown spots.

Haunts: Forests, where it searches for insects among fallen leaves. The only record I know for Kodaikanal is by Terry, who shot one on its nest on June 7th.

Song: Said to be not so continuous as that of the Blackbird, but with longer intervals between brief phrases.

15. **Malabar Whistling Thrush.** *Myophonus horsfieldii*.

Length: 12 in., as large as the Dove.

Field-marks: Black, with patches of bright blue on wings and forehead.

Haunts: Along a water-course in a wild and wooded ravine. Fairly common.

Song: Heard at sunset and early in the morning. The smoothness and clearness of its tones, and the length and variety of the song, are remarkable. It has forgotten its tune, but it whistles on. Many of the tones are lower than the human whistler can reach, so the name 'Whistling Schoolboy' is not entirely appropriate.

FLYCATCHERS.

16. Tickell's Blue Flycatcher. *Muscicapula tickelliae*.

Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.

Field-marks: Dark blue, but with the breast reddish.

Haunts: Large shady trees without undergrowth. Fairbank observed it frequently from top to bottom of the hills, but I have met it only in the lower hills. Rare.

Song: Said to be 'a musical little trill', or 'a little whistling chirrup'.

17. Nilgiri Blue Flycatcher. *Eumyias albicaudata*.

Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.

Field-marks: Dark-blue nearly all over. The outer tail feathers are white at the base. Vent grey. Legs black. It should be carefully compared with the Shortwing. The female is dull brown and blue. Young speckled birds with only a few spots of blue are often seen.

Haunts: In trees, near houses or in remote sholas. Common.

Song: A mild, rather sweet song of 6 or 8 notes, often with a glide in each note that gives it a somewhat mournful effect. The bird is lethargic, and sings for a long time from one open perch all through the day.

18. Black and Orange Flycatcher. *Ochromela nigrorufa*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Head, neck, and wings black, the rest burnt-orange.

Haunts: In the thickest bushes of the darkest sholas. Fairly common.

Song: Rather sweet, but hoarser than that of the Grey-headed. It has usually only three notes to a phrase, and is a little lacking in animation.

Call: A series of 4 or 5 chattering notes.

19. Grey-headed Flycatcher. *Culicicapa ceylonensis*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: A dark-blue head (in spite of the name). The rest of the bird is yellow and olive.

Haunts: Found in groups or pairs in the sholas. They are seldom still, but constantly dashing about, catching insects on the wing. Common.

Song: A thin and high-pitched trill, somewhat metallic in quality. It has a call of four whistled notes, sweet and clear. There is also a variety of explosive alarm-notes.

SHRIKES.

20. **Southern Rufous-backed Shrike.** *Lanius schach caniceps*.

Length: 9 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: A black mask over the eyes. Ashy-grey above and white below. Rump, sides, and lower back are rufous.

Haunts: It chooses an open and conspicuous perch. Common.

Call: Its nasal grating note is longer than a similar note of the Myna's. Its song, not a bad attempt, is less commonly heard.

21. **Black-backed Pied Shrike.** *Hemipus picatus*.

Length: 5.5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Head and upper parts mainly black, beneath white.

Haunts: An active bird of the tree-tops, sometimes in company with White-eyes and Tits. Uncommon.

Song: Weak and high-pitched, but clear and varied. One form of it see-saws back and forth between two notes.

MINIVETS.

22. **Orange Minivet.** *Pericrocotus flammeus*.

Length: 8 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: Head and upper back black, the rest bright red-orange. The female is yellow, grey, and black.

Haunts: Always seen in small flocks in the tree-tops. Fairly common.

Call: Some high, clear whistles draw one's attention to the arrival of a flock in a nearby tree. The song is a shrill, pleasant warble, not often heard.

SWALLOW SHRIKES.

23. **Ashy Swallow-Shrike.** *Artamus fuscus*.

Length: 7 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: A short, thick-set bird, with short, pointed wings. Bill thick and pale-blue. Plumage dark bluish-ashy.

Haunts: They may be seen, often in pairs, sitting motionless on a high branch of a blue-gum tree, or soaring slowly in mid-air. Uncommon.

Call: A soft nasal 'yank', which is easily remembered when once heard.

DRONGOS.

24. **Southern Bronzed Drongo.** *Chaptia aenea malayensis*.

Length: 9 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: Glossy blue-black, with a long forked tail.

Haunts: Open perches. I have seen a Drongo in Kodaikanal only once, at Pambar House garden. It was most likely this species, which is found in the lower hills. Rare.

Song: Much sweeter than the plains bird's.

WARBLERS.

25. **Blyth's Reed Warbler.** *Acrocephalus dumetorum*.

Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.

Field-marks: Tail long and graduated. Olive-brown above. A pale streak from top of bill to eye. Throat whitish, belly pale buff.

Haunts: Dense undergrowth. In Travancore, this is a winter visitor, leaving in mid-April. But Terry shot one at Putthur (6,000 ft.) on June 26th, and saw a pair at Kukkal. So perhaps it breeds in these hills. Rare.

Call: A sudden 'chick' or 'chuck' or 'chur-r-r', at frequent intervals.

Song: A slight warble, according to Wait.

26. Red-headed Fantail Warbler. *Cisticola exilis erythrocephala*.

Length: 4 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: The top of the head is chestnut. The back has black streaks. The under-parts are rusty.

Haunts: Open grass-lands. I have found it common only in a few localities.

Call: A nasal 'peeeken', followed by a clear whistled 'toowhee'. (Beavan's Wren-Warbler, *Franklinia rufescens*, and the Rufous-fronted Wren Warbler, *Franklinia buchanani*, are said by the authorities not to be found as far south as Kodaikanal. I have records that seem nearer to these than to any other species. Perhaps further collecting on the Palni Hills will show an extension of the known range of at least one of the *Franklinias*.)

27. Broad-tailed Grass Warbler. *Schoenicola platyura*.

Length: 7 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: The under-parts are bright-rusty, except for a white band down the centre. Above, red-brown. The eye-brow is grey and inconspicuous.

Haunts: Bracken slopes, singing from a bush-top. Uncommon.

Song: A shrill and sweet trill, ending with a few warbling notes and 'chack's'. It is the best song of any of our warblers'.

28. Thick-billed Warbler. *Phragmaticola aëdon*.

Length: 7.5 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Above, light-brown, with a tinge of yellowish. No white eye-brow. Tail graduated.

Haunts: Tall grass and weeds. A winter visitor only, but I have records until May 2nd. Rare.

Call: A loud, harsh 'chuck' and 'chur-r', quickly repeated.

29. Sykes' Tree Warbler. *Hippolais rama*.

Length: 5.5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Tail slightly rounded. Olive-brown above, with a faint pale eyebrow. Below, pale buff, with the throat and centre of abdomen nearly white.

Haunts: Thick bushes. A winter visitor staying into April. Rare.

Call: A low wren-like chatter.

30. Tickell's Willow Warbler. *Phylloscopus affinis.*

Length: 4.5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Deep yellow below, dull olive above. No wing-bars. Yellow eye-brow.

Haunts: Trees, moving about constantly among the leaves. A winter visitor staying through April. Fairly common.

Song: A brief, twittering warble.

31. Green Willow Warbler. *Phylloscopus nitidus nitidus.*

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Green above, yellow below. Two wing-bars. Yellow eye-brow.

Haunts: Trees. A winter visitor, noted as late as mid-May. Rare.

Call: A little 'chirrup' or 'chi-wee'.

32. Greenish Willow Warbler. *Phylloscopus nitidus viridanus.*

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: One faint wing-bar. Yellow eyebrow. Olive-brown above, under-parts yellowish grey.

Haunts: A restless bird, found in heavy foliage. It is a winter visitor only, and disappears about the middle of May. Fairly common.

Song: A brief, pleasant warble of four or five notes, given very frequently.

33. Large-billed Willow Warbler. *Phylloscopus magnirostris.*

Length: 5.5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Two wing-bars. Yellow eye-brow. Below, pale yellow, with much grey on the breast.

Haunts: A winter visitor, in trees, staying until late in April. Said to be common in the Travancore hills. I have only a few doubtful records. Rare.

Song: A whistle of 2 or 3 or 4 syllables (authorities differ), almost robin-like in tone.

34. Western Dull-green Willow Warbler. *Phylloscopus trochiloides ludlowi.*

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: The eye-brow is smaller and less conspicuous than in the preceding species.

Haunts: Some of our transient warblers in April probably belong to this species. In trees. Rare?

Call: A sparrow-like chirp, repeated several times in succession.

35. Large-crowned Willow Warbler. *Phylloscopus occipitalis.*

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Resembles the other willow-warblers, but there is a distinct pale line from the bill backward over the top of the head.

Haunts: Trees. A winter visitor only. My only record is on April 21.

Call: A loud, sharp 'tit-weet'.

36. **Ashy Wren-Warbler.** *Prinia socialis*.

Length: 5.5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Smooth bluish-grey above. Black line through eye. Below, pink. The most brightly-coloured of our warblers.

Haunts: Bracken slopes, where it sings from a bush-top or in a short flight. Common.

Song: A shrill, emphatic, double note, repeated 5 or 6 times together. In rhythm, this song is similar to that of the Tailor-bird but its tone is less musical.

Calls: A cat-like snarl, and a nasal scolding.

37. **South Indian Wren-Warbler.** *Prinia inornata franklinii*.

Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.

Field-marks: Dull brown above, the feathers slightly darker at their centres. Eye-brow white. Tail white-tipped.

Haunts: Bracken slopes, especially on the higher hills. Common.

Song: An insect-like 'tlik, tlik—', more wheezy than the preceding.

Call: A little 'kink, kink,—'.

MYNAS.

38. **Southern Jungle Myna.** *Aethiopsar griseus mahrattensis*.

Length: 9.5 in., larger than the Bulbul.

Field-marks: Some erect feathers on the forehead. It lacks the bare yellow skin around the eye of the plains bird, and is more slaty than brown.

Haunts: About houses. Its name 'Jungle' is a mistake, as far as we can see in Kodaikanal. Abundant.

Calls: Varied and rough, less musical than those of the Common Myna.

MUNIAS.

39. **Black-headed Munia.** *Munia malacca*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Black head, chestnut-red wings and back, and white belly. Its thick, seed-crunching bill is pale blue in colour.

Haunts: Small flocks in weeds on open hillsides or in gardens. Uncommon.

Call: A very sweet chattering.

40. **White-throated Munia.** *Uroloncha malabarica*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Plumage light-brown above, white below and on face. The tail is blackish and wedge-shaped. Bill dull bluish.

Haunts: Bushy hillsides. Rare.

Call: A feeble 'chee, chee,—'.

41. **Indian Spotted Munia.** *Uroloncha punctulata lineoventer*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Dark red-brown head, golden-brown back. Below, blackish, finely dotted with white.

Haunts: Found in small flocks in weeds, chiefly at lower elevations. Rare.

Call: A petulant 'kitty-kitty-kitty', according to Whistler.

42. Indian Red Munia. *Amandava amandava*.

Length: 4 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Dark red, with some small white spots. The female is a brown bird with only a little red on the back.

Haunts: In flocks in bushes on open hillsides. Uncommon.

Calls: A high-pitched musical twittering.

FINCHES.

43. Common Indian Rose Finch. *Carpodacus erythrinus roseatus*.

Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.

Field-marks: Brown, tinged with rosy, especially on the head. Conical bill.

Haunts: I have seen it only along the edges of sholas. A winter visitor, until mid-April. Rare.

Song: Said to be rather pleasant.

SWALLOWS.

44. Nilgiri House Swallow. *Hirundo javanica domicola*.

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Glossy blue-black above. Tail forked, spotted near the end with white.

Haunts: Breeds in a few houses, especially near Coaker's Walk. It swoops low through the air, bringing its wings back close to its body with each stroke. Contrast the Swift's method of flying. Fairly common.

Calls: A musical twittering, and a variety of shrill squeals and whistles.

WAGTAILS.

45. Large Pied Wagtail. *Motacilla maderaspatensis*.

Length: 9 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: Head, throat, and back black. Eye-brow and lower parts white. Long tail.

Haunts: Around the lake and along water-courses. Often finds its food on lawns. A convenient housetop is a favourite perch. Fairly common.

Song: High-pitched, long, and clear,—one of the finest at Kodaikanal.

46. Eastern Grey Wagtail. *Motacilla cinerea caspica*.

Length: 7.5 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Grey above, yellow and white below. A constantly wagging tail.

Haunts: This is a winter visitor, but until mid-May is a conspicuous bird, likely to be met anywhere in the settlement, on the ground. Common.

Call: A high-pitched, strong 'seep'.

PIPITS.

47. Indian Tree Pipit. *Anthus hodgsoni*.

Length: 7 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Streaky olive-brown above. Below, creamy and white, with brown spots all the way from the neck to the vent.

Haunts: A winter visitor, leaving in April or early May. Found on the ground in shady places, where it can fly into a tree for safety. Fairly common.

Call: A faint, plaintive note.

48. The Nilgiri Pipit. *Anthus nilghiriensis*.

Length: 7 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Streaked with black and pale olive above. Eye-brow rufous. Lower parts tawny, the breast and sides being streaked with black.

Haunts: Open grassy hills. I think I have seen it a few times. Fairbank called it common, and Terry found it more common than the Malay Pipit.

Song: A chipping song given while fluttering in the air, probably belongs to this species.

49. Rufous Rock Pipit. *Anthus similis*.

Length: 8 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: A narrow black moustache. Only the breast is spotted with brown. Above, streaky dark-brown. Below, creamy, and eyebrow of the same colour.

Haunts: I have found it regularly on the swampy meadow near the south-west corner of the lake, and occasionally elsewhere. Fairly common.

Song: A feeble, high whistle, given during a circular dipping flight, followed by a dive to the ground. Or, a few high-pitched 'chip's'.

50. The Malay Pipit. *Anthus rufulus malayensis*.

Length: 6.5 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Streaked above with pale brown, dark brown, and blackish. The eye-brow and lower parts are pale creamy. The sides and breast are streaked with dark brown.

Haunts: In open grassy land. I have found it at the south-west corner of the lake. Fairly common.

Song: Five to ten 'chink's', uttered while flying up a short distance.

LARKS.

51. Small Nilgiri Sky Lark. *Alauda gulgula australis*.

Length: 6.5 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Streaked with dark brown and rufous above. Eye-brow and under-parts tinged with rufous. The breast is streaked with brown. Distinguished from the Pipits by its more crouching position, and its habit of squatting instead of running away when one approaches.

Haunts: On the downs outside the settlement. Abundant.

Song: Long, sweet, and inspiring, given while the bird soars higher than the eye can follow.

Call: A liquid 'chirrup'.

52. **Malabar Crested Lark.** *Galerida malabarica.*

Length: 7 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: A crest on the head; otherwise a streaky brown bird like the Sky Lark.

Haunts: Grassy hill-tops just beyond the houses. Fairly common.

Song: Said to resemble the Sky Lark's. Often, a lark song is a mere chattering or chipping, and lasts not more than a quarter of a minute. Perhaps such songs are from this species.

Call: A rather sweet 'tee-ur', according to Whistler.

WHITE-EYES.

53. **The Nilgiri White-eye.** *Zosterops palpebrosa nilgiriensis.*

Length: 4 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Yellow-green above. Breast yellow, belly white. A white eye-ring.

Haunts: Always found in trees or bushes, busily moving from branch to branch in loose companies. Abundant.

Song: Their mild querulous notes are heard all the time. They remind me of the call of a baby chick which is somewhat sleepy. The song is a brief, weak trill.

SUNBIRDS.

54. **The Small Sunbird.** *Cinnyris minima.*

Length: 3.5 in., our smallest bird (with the Flowerpecker).

Field-marks: Curved bill. Head and neck dull green. Wings dark brown. Underparts entirely deep yellow. There are other plumages, and in them all the red back is a distinguishing mark, but this is not easy to see.

Haunts: About flowers. Fairly common.

Song: A loud, ringing trill.

SPIDER-HUNTERS.

55. **Little Spider-hunter.** *Arachnothera longirostra.*

Length: 6 in., one-fourth of which is bill. Smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: An extra-long bill. Throat white, belly yellow. Above, dull brown, grey, and olive.

Haunts: Around flowering trees. Rare.

FLOWERPECKERS.

56. **Nilgiri Flowerpecker.** *Dicaeum concolor.*

Length: 3.5 in., shares with the Small Sunbird the distinction of being our smallest bird.

Field-marks: Very dull coloured. The upper parts are green and brown, the lower parts whitish. Face white,

Haunts : A restless bird, seldom allowing a good view. Always well up in trees, favouring those that have parasitic growths on them. Abundant.

Call : A sharp 'check' makes identification easy.

Song : A high-pitched trill, weak and wiry.

WOODPECKERS.

57. Little Scaly-bellied Green Woodpecker. *Picus xanthopygæus*.

Length : 11 in., smaller than the Dove.

Field-marks : The back is green and much-spotted. The male has a large red crest, the female a black one.

Haunts : On tree-trunks and large branches. Uncommon.

Call : Its drumming is as rapid as a steam-hammer, and must give the bird the same satisfaction that most birds get from singing. Its call is a single, mild, falsetto note, not often heard.

58. Malherbe's Golden-backed Woodpecker. *Chrysocolaptes guttacristatus chersonesus*.

Length : 11 in., smaller than the Dove.

Field-marks : The back and wings are golden-olive, lower back crimson. The male is red-crested, the female content with black. The black and white lines on the side of the head are conspicuous.

Haunts : On tree-trunks. Uncommon.

Call : A harsh scream of several syllables.

BARBETS.

59. Small Green Barbet. *Thereiceryx viridis*.

Length : 9.5 in., the same as the Myna.

Field-marks : All green, except for a streaked brown head and white chin. The bill is heavy and flesh-coloured.

Haunts : In thick trees, where its bright colour matches the leaves. Abundant.

Song : Wooden in tone, loud, and frequently uttered. One form is a long trill, followed by a two-syllabled 'hook-krrr', often repeated. When one bird sings, others join in the chorus. The Hoopoe's note is softer in tone, the Scimitar's deeper.

CUCKOOS.

60. Southern Crow-Pheasant. *Centropus sinensis parroti*.

Length : 19 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks : All black, except for the wings, which are red-chestnut. The eyes are red.

Haunts : This dignified, overgrown cuckoo is found in thick bushes and on the ground, often near houses. I have seen it only once as high as Kodaikanal. Rare.

Call : A hoot of very deep tone. It is loud enough to be heard clearly a mile or more away. Except that it does not inhale, it reminds one of the call of the Langur Monkey.

KINGFISHERS.

61. **Common Ceylon Kingfisher.** *Alcedo atthis taprobana*.
Length: 6 in., the same as the Chat.
Field-marks: Bright-blue back. The head is dark, with a streak of white behind the eye. Below, chestnut. **The Three-toed Kingfisher** with its orange head and rump, may also occur here.
Haunts: Lakes and streams. Uncommon.
Call: A sharp squeak.

62. **Ceylon White-breasted Kingfisher.** *Halcyon smyrnensis fusca*.
Length: 10.5 in., larger than the Myna.
Field-marks: Large red bill, with an oversized head. White breast, sharply contrasted with dark brown below and blue above.
Haunts: Usually they nest in the sand-bank near the ball-field.
 Uncommon.
Call: A loud, defiant, rattling laugh.

HOOPoes.

63. **Ceylon Hoopoe.** *Upupa epops ceylonensis*.
Length: 11 in., smaller than the Dove.
Field-marks: A remarkable rufous and black crest, which it folds and spreads frequently, like a fan. Mostly tan-coloured, with black and white wings. A long, curved bill.
Haunts: Never far from houses, in any opening of which it nests. Feeds mostly on the ground. Common.
Call: A soft, wooden 'hoop, hoop', softer than a Barbet's notes. Sometimes, three 'hoop's' are given together.

SWIFTS.

64. **White-rumped Spinetail.** *Indicapus sylvaticus*.
Length: 4.5 in., smaller than the Chat.
Field-marks: Blackish, with both rump and belly white.
Haunts: In the air all the time, usually near forests at lower elevations. I have seen it only once near Pillar Rocks.
Call: A rapidly-repeated 'swicky-sweezy'.

65. **Indian Alpine Swift.** *Micropus melba bakeri*.
Length: 8 in., smaller than the Myna.
Field-marks: The lower parts are white, except for a brown band across the breast. The upper plumage is smooth brown. Tail forked.
Haunts: Seen singly, high in air, flying very swiftly and soaring a good deal. The manner of flight of any swift distinguishes it at once from a swallow. The swift's wings are not brought back parallel with the body, but are held well out from the body like the flukes of an anchor. Uncommon.
Call: Loud, shrill, and tremulous.

66. **Nepal Indian House Swift.** *Micropus affinis nipalensis*.
Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.
Field-marks: A blackish bird with a white rump.

Haunts: In large flocks high in the air, occasionally at Kodai-kanal, more common at other places in the hills.

Call: A musical twittering, kept up all the time.

67. Indian Edible-nest Swiftlet. *Collocalia fuciphaga unicolor.*

Length: 5 in., smaller than the Chat.

Field-marks: Dull brown above, with darker wings. Grey below. The Swiftlet is a slow-flying bird, and flutters much more than the Swallows and other Swifts.

Haunts: Seen flying over the lake or open places anywhere. Said to nest in the 'chimney' at Pillar Rocks. Abundant.

Call: A shrill twittering, less musical than that of the House Swift. Often they are silent.

68. Indian Crested Swift. *Hemiprocne coronata.*

Length: 9 in., smaller than the Myna.

Field-marks: Blue-grey above, grey and white below. The blackish tail is very deeply forked.

Haunts: Flying. Rare.

Call: Resembles a parrot's scream.

NIGHTJARS.

69. Indian Jungle Nightjar. *Caprimulgus indicus.*

Length: 11 in., smaller than the Dove.

Field-marks: The tail has a broken band of white across near the end. The general effect is grey-brown, much mottled.

Haunts: Near woods, at night. Terry found it common at some places in the hills. Rare at Kodaikanal.

Call: *Do-sol* (lower), repeated over and over. Also, a low 'chuck'.

OWLS.

70. Bengal Brown Fish Owl. *Ketupa zeylonensis leschenaulti.*

Length: 24 in., twice as large as the Dove.

Field-marks: Ear-tufts ('horns') present. The facial disc is not clear.

Haunts: Sholas, at night. Rare.

Call: 'Gloom-oh-gloom', in a solemn bass voice.

VULTURES.

71. Indian Long-billed Vulture. *Gyps indicus.*

Length: 38 in., our largest bird.

Field-marks: Brown and whitish, rather patchy in appearance. A young White Vulture will answer to this description also, but is readily told by its size.

Haunts: Usually below the town. Rare.

72. Indian White-backed Vulture. *Pseudogyps bengalensis.*

Length: 35 in., three times as large as the Dove.

Field-marks: A blackish bird, with white patches on the lower back, sides, and under-wings. Like the other vultures, its head appears too small for its heavy body and broad wings.

Haunts: Often several soaring about below the bazaar. Fairly common.

73. Smaller White Scavenger Vulture. *Neophron percnopterus ginginianus*.

Length: 24 in., twice as large as the Dove.

Field-marks: Yellowish-white, with some black in the wings.

Haunts: Chiefly below the bazaar, looking for carrion and garbage. Fairly common.

FALCONS.

74. Indian Kestrel. *Falco tinnunculus objurgatus*.

Length: 13 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: A slender, long-tailed hawk, mainly red and blue in colour.

Haunts: Open hillsides. It often stands in one spot in the air, either by beating its wings rapidly or by facing the wind almost motionless. Fairly common.

Call: A shrill laughing scream.

EAGLES.

75. Bonelli's Eagle. *Hieraëtus fasciatus*.

Length: 27 in., over twice as large as the Dove.

Field-marks: Below, white with black streaks. Above, dark brown with white splotches. Tail cross-barred below.

Haunts: This dignified bird may be met along the borders of woods, in or out of the settlement. Uncommon.

Call: Shrill and creaking.

76. Indian Black Eagle. *Ictinaëtus malayensis perniger*.

Length: 27 in., over twice as large as the Dove.

Field-marks: All black, except for yellow beak and legs.

Haunts: Not far from forests. I have seen a pair in the open from Coaker's Walk.

Call: A shrill cry.

KITES.

77. The Brahminy Kite. *Haliastur indus*.

Length: 20 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: Head and neck white, the rest chestnut-brown. The immature bird is splotchy, and its best mark is a prominent white band across the under side of the wing.

Haunts: May be seen flying anywhere about the settlement, not far from water. Uncommon.

Call: A squealing note.

78. The Common Kite. *Milvus migrans govinda*.

Length: 21 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: Tail slightly forked. Streaky dark-brown plumage.

Haunts: Anywhere around the town, in the air, looking for scraps to eat. Common.

Call: A shrill, quavering scream.

BUZZARDS.

79. **Black-winged Kite.** *Elanus caeruleus vociferus.*

Length: 13 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: Above, grey and black. The forehead, lower parts, and most of the tail, are white.

Haunts: They fly low over grassy hilltops, as graceful as terns over the sea. Rare.

Call: Said to be a thin, high-pitched squeal.

HAWKS.

80. **Indian Shikra.** *Astur badius dussumieri.*

Length: 13 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: A small, slender, ashy-grey hawk. The wings are short and rounded, the tail long.

Haunts: Dashes through light forest. I have only two Kodai-knal records.

Call: A loud, shrill cry, 'titu, titu—'.

PIGEONS.

81. **Jerdon's Imperial Pigeon.** *Ducula badia cuprea.*

Length: 17 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: Grey, bluish, and brown. Throat white.

Haunts: They sit quietly in heavy trees in sholas. Rare.

Call: A loud, booming 'who, whoo'.

82. **Indian Blue Rock Pigeon.** *Columba livia intermedia.*

Length: 12 in., the same as the Dove.

Field-marks: Slaty-blue, with black bars in wings and tail. The tail is short and squarish. This is the ancestor of the domestic pigeon.

Haunts: In the vicinity of rocky cliffs where they nest. Uncommon.

Call: Resembles that of the domestic bird.

83. **Nilgiri Wood Pigeon.** *Columba elphinstonii.*

Length: 16 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: Brown wings. On the side of the neck, a black patch with small white spots in it. Otherwise greenish-grey.

Haunts: They sit quietly in dense trees. Uncommon.

Call: 'Coo's' of very low tone, from four to eight in number. Softer than the Crow-Pheasant's call, they are more owl-like in quality.

DOVES.

84. **Indian Spotted Dove.** *Streptopelia chinensis suratensis.*

Length: 12 in., larger than the Hoopoe.

Field-marks: Head is small in proportion to the body.

The tail is longer than in the pigeons. The wings and back are pale brown with lighter spots. Otherwise, mostly ashy-grey.

Haunts: In trees. Common.

Call: A soft, wooden 'cuckoo, cooo, cooo, cooo'. The tone is similar to the Hoopoe's note, but the rhythm is distinctive.

JUNGLE FOWL.

85. **Grey Jungle Fowl.** *Gallus sonneratii*.

Length: 30 in., half of which is tail. A large bird.

Field-marks: Black and brown with white spots.

Haunts: Larger jungles, mostly below Kodaikanal. Uncommon.

Call: A fowl-like crow, 'kuk-kaa kurra kuk'.

SPUR-FOWL.

86. **Travancore Red Spur-Fowl.** *Galloperdix spadicea stewarti*.

Length: 15 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: A slender, pheasant-like fowl. Dark brown and chestnut, with a red bill.

Haunts: Larger jungles and pine plantations. Fairly common.

Call: A chuckling or cackling cry, usually of only two syllables.

QUAIL.

87. **Malabar Jungle Bush-Quail.** *Perdica asiatica vidali*.

Length: 6.5 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Brown, marked with chestnut and black above. Below, cross-bars of black and white.

Haunts: On the ground, in tall grass and bushes on the downs. Rare.

Call: A whistled 'tiri-tiri-tiri'.

88. **Painted Bush-Quail.** *Cryptoplectron erythrorhynchum*.

Length: 7 in., larger than the Chat.

Field-marks: Brown, with black and buff streaks. A white throat bordered with black.

Haunts: Little groups of them run along the ground in thick grass or underbrush remote from houses. They give one the briefest sort of view when they fly off. Uncommon.

Call: A whistled 'kirikee', repeated several times.

WOODCOCK.

89. **The Woodcock.** *Scolopax rusticola*.

Length: 13 in., larger than the Dove.

Field-marks: Long bill. Stripes across the head, not lengthwise. Beautifully mottled brown, black, and white.

Haunts: A winter visitor only, staying into May. Found in woods near water. Rare.

Call: A nasal 'beep' when flying about at dusk.

SNIPE.

90. **Fantail Snipe.** *Capella gallinago*.

Length: 10.5 in., larger than the Myna.

Field-marks: A thick-set bird with a long bill. Three yellowish lines run lengthwise over the top of the head. The upper plumage is streaked black, white, and brown. Below, mostly white.

Haunts: Swampy places near sholas. Flies usually at dusk. It stays as a migrant until early May. Uncommon.

Call: A nasal 'scap'.